

SEAC4RS Orientation Package
“Preliminary” Pre-Deployment Information

This orientation package is to help you know what to expect **before** you arrive in Thailand and Bangladesh. Please read this entire document carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kent Shiffer, Jhony Zavaleta. ESPO will also provide an additional orientation addendum once you arrive to provide any additional information we acquire between now and then.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

DOCUMENTATION:

Passports:

Be sure to have your passport or green card with you. It is a good idea to photocopy your passport to keep with you at all times, while you leave your actual passport in the security safe in your hotel room.

Visas:

Thailand: U.S. citizens carrying a tourist passport and in possession of an onward or return airline ticket do not require a visa to enter Thailand. The passport must have at least six months validity remaining to be allowed entry. Upon entry, Thai immigration officials will place an immigration stamp in the passport permitting a 30-day stay in Thailand if arriving by air or a 15-day stay if arriving by land.

If an individual wishes to remain in Thailand for more than 30 days, he/she may wish to obtain a tourist visa at the Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate in the United States, prior to arriving in Thailand. The tourist visa must be used within 90 days from the date of issue and allows an initial stay of 60 days. After arrival in Thailand, a tourist visa may be extended twice, each time for an additional 30 days. There is a 1,900 Baht fee for each extension.

The Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens carrying a diplomatic or official passport obtain a visa prior to arriving in Thailand.

Bangladesh: Visas upon arrival are ~**\$51 U.S. DOLLARS, CASH ONLY**. An expeditor service will be arranged for you to get through customs, and is approximately 450 taka + tip/person. This service is very necessary to alleviate any issues getting through customs and will also save you a lot of time. They assist with baggage and escorting you to your hotel shuttle as well.

CURRENCY/ FOREIGN EXCHANGE:

- Before you leave for your SEAC4Rs deployment, call your credit card company to let them know you will be traveling out of the country to avoid any problems using your debit/credit card.
- The best way to obtain the local currency is from the ATMs at the airport upon arrival. Be aware that there is usually a surcharge approximately \$5 USD to use the ATMs. ATMS can also be found at the hotels.
- Be familiar with the exchange rate before you arrive. A good website to find current exchange rates is at: www.oanda.com/currency/travel-exchange-rates. This website also provides cheat sheets you can print out for your wallet.
- Bring at least **\$60 U.S. dollars cash** with you if are going on the suitcase flight to Bangladesh.

TRANSPORTATION:

Cars in Thailand and Bangladesh drive on the left side of the road (opposite of the US). Road rules are very relaxed and require drivers to be very defensive and very assertive. Roads and highways in city areas are very congested with scooters, cars and trucks and travel takes much longer than expected.

Rental cars are NOT advised.

(To Phala Cliff Resort and Spa – Hotel – Ban Chang, Rayong)

After obtaining your luggage at Suvarnabhumi airport, proceed to the AOT Limousine counter, there are many located throughout the terminal. This is the U.S. Embassy's recommendation for safe taxi service to Ban Chang, which takes between 2 and 4 hours to drive depending on traffic out of Bangkok. A one-way fare for 3-4 people to Ban Chang is about 2600 baht, including gas & toll fee. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE HOTEL WITH YOU to avoid any confusion with the driver or limousine service.**

(To and From Utapao Airport from Hotel)

- We are working on arrangements for a shuttle service to and from the hotel and airport. The driver will have a list of names for the passengers but will not wait.

(Nearby Pattaya City)

- Most taxis are not metered it is important to negotiate the rate.
- Keep the address and contact number of your hotel in case you get lost and to give to taxi drivers in case there is a language barrier.
- Pattaya is approximately 30 minutes taxi ride from the hotel in Ban Chang.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Thailand (Utapao)

Phala Cliff Beach Resort and Spa is a medium size hotel with 310 rooms. ESPO is negotiating a room block and we expect to take a majority of the rooms for the SEAC4RS personnel. DO NOT make reservations yourself. Standard rooms include a double bed, in-room security safe, refrigerator, and are air-conditioned. Breakfast is included with the room rate. Wireless is available in the hotel room.

The hotel property is very convenient to Utapao Airport. Some of the restaurants are open late night and early morning. There is also a gym, swimming pool, and a business center. The hotel laundry service is very inexpensive and it is recommended you go through the hotel and not a local Laundromat. The hotel is located on the beach at outskirts of Ban Chang and it is advised that you take a taxi or tuk-tuk to the downtown area.

Hotel Website:

<http://www.plataniresort.com/>

Bangladesh

The **Radisson Water Garden Hotel** in Dhaka is gated and very secure, and about 30 minutes away from the airport. The rooms are air conditioned, and have refrigerators, in room safes, and wired internet access in rooms. There is wireless internet access in the hotel lobby. There are also three restaurants in the hotel which serve a variety of cuisine. Breakfast is not included.

The **Westin Hotel** is also a very secure hotel in downtown Dhaka. The rooms are air conditioned and have refrigerators, and internet access is available for a fee. There are six restaurants in the hotel.

Hotel Websites:

Radisson: <http://www.radisson.com/dhaka-hotel-bd-1206/bandhaka>

Westin: <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=1394>

Bangladesh

A hotel shuttle bus will be arranged to pick you up from the airport to the hotel. Both the Westin and Radisson can arrange taxis for transportation around the city as well.

COMMUNICATION:

Cell phones:

- You can rent cell phones long term at the Bangkok airport.
- AT&T service works very well in Thailand and Bangladesh.
- If you are using your own cell phone, remember to turn off data roaming on your phone to avoid being charged exorbitant amounts.

HEALTH/SAFETY:

- Make sure you have proper vaccination at least four to six weeks before you deploy to Thailand and Bangladesh.
- Visit <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>, which provides up to date, accurate and credible health information for travelers on the specific countries.
- Make sure that your health insurance covers you in both Bangladesh and Thailand. You may need additional travel health insurance.
- Make sure to carry medications and prescriptions with you on the plane, in case your baggage gets lost.
- Keep the address and contact number of your hotel in case you get lost and to give to taxi drivers in case there is a language barrier.
- *Bangladesh Food Safety:* It is highly recommended that you do not eat or especially drink anything from the roadside vendors, small restaurants or even the hotel room in Bangladesh. The restaurants in the hotel are a little on the pricey side but have higher health standards.
- *Thailand Food Safety:* Food is very good in Thailand but be advised not to eat anything not completely cooked. Raw meats, including fish, should be left to the locals. It is not advised to drink water from a street vendor unless it is factory bottled. Thailand has a variety of fresh and plentiful seafood. Fruit of almost any kind is grown in Thailand and is very good. You should always carry Imodium AD just in case your stomach does not agree with the cuisine. Many of the restaurants are either outdoors or partially outdoors.
- **DRINK ONLY BOTTLED WATER** in both Thailand and Bangladesh. Make sure the lid has not been tampered with before you open it. Wipe off the tops of soda cans before you open.

WEATHER

Pattaya , Thailand

Climate data for Pattaya													[hide]
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C	30.7	31.0	31.8	32.9	32.4	31.6	31.3	31.1	31.0	30.6	30.4	29.9	31.23
Average low °C	23.0	24.3	25.4	26.4	26.5	26.5	26.0	26.0	25.1	24.2	23.4	22.2	24.92
Precipitation mm	13.7	12.0	52.5	61.6	154.6	149.9	87.0	98.6	217.1	242.6	82.8	6.4	1,178.8
Average high °F	87.3	87.8	89.2	91.2	90.3	88.9	88.3	88	87.8	87.1	86.7	85.8	88.21
Average low °F	73.4	75.7	77.7	79.5	79.7	79.7	78.8	78.8	77.2	75.6	74.1	72	76.85
Precipitation inches	0.539	0.472	2.067	2.425	6.087	5.902	3.425	3.882	8.547	9.551	3.26	0.252	46.409

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Climate data for Dhaka													[hide]
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	25.6 (78)	30 (86)	33.9 (93)	36.1 (97)	36.7 (98)	34.4 (94)	32.8 (91)	32.2 (90)	32.2 (90)	31.1 (88)	29.4 (85)	26.7 (80)	31.7 (89)
Average low °C (°F)	15 (59)	19.4 (67)	25 (77)	27.2 (81)	28.3 (83)	28.3 (83)	27.2 (81)	27.2 (81)	27.2 (81)	26.1 (79)	18.9 (66)	16.1 (61)	23.9 (75)
Precipitation mm (inches)	8 (0.3)	20 (0.8)	58 (2.3)	117 (4.6)	267 (10.5)	358 (14.1)	399 (15.7)	318 (12.5)	257 (10.1)	163 (6.4)	30 (1.2)	6 (0.2)	1,970 (77.9)
Source: weather.com ^[33]													

Source: weather.com ^[33]

Thai Culture

- At the time this orientation package is printed, local currency is (USD) to (BAHT).
- Thais greet each other with a 'wai', a prayer-like, palms-together gesture, not a handshake. Generally, a younger person 'wais' an elder or senior person, who will then return the gesture. Even though most Thais are familiar with the Western handshake, a 'wai' is always appreciated.

Helpful links:

Information about the city:

- <http://pattayacity.com/>
- <http://wikitravel.org/en/Pattaya>
- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand/chonburi-province/pattaya>

Local News in Pattaya/Thailand:

- <http://www.pattayadailynews.com/en/>
- <http://www.bangkokpost.com/>

Bangladesh Culture

- The Bangladesh locals are very nice; most employees at the airport and hotel speak good English.
- The country is very poor and you might be a bit culture shocked at the poverty in downtown Dhaka. Be polite. Bangladesh is a 90% Muslim country and very conservative in their clothing. Wearing shorts, skirts and tank tops are highly frowned upon and considered disrespectful. Please respect this part of the Bangladesh culture, even in warm weather. Modest short sleeve shirts are acceptable.
- Do not use your left hand to pay anyone or give or take anything from anybody. Left hand is considered to be unclean. Pay with your right hand.
- Do not smoke in public.
- Be careful of where you take pictures. Certain areas may be restricted and jail time can be enforced.
- At the time this orientation package is printed, local currency is (USD) to (TAKA).

Helpful links:

Information about Dhaka:

- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bangladesh/dhaka>
- http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/places/cities/city_dhaka.html

Local News:

- <http://www.thedailystar.net>

Emergencies

U.S. Embassy

The American Citizen Services section provides emergency services to Americans in the event of an emergency such as a death, arrest, illness, injury, missing persons, destitution and other circumstances. However, the type of services provided are limited. For general information on the type of services that can be provided, please refer to the State Department's website for travelers: <http://travel.state.gov>.

Keep the contact number of the U.S. Embassy in Thailand and Bangladesh in case of emergency.

U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand

A U.S. citizen who wishes to request emergency assistance can come in or call the American Citizen Services section during normal business hours at 66-2-205-4049 from outside of Thailand, or 02-205-4049 within Thailand. Outside of normal business hours, the person should call the Embassy switchboard at 66-2-205-4000 from outside of Thailand, or 02-205-4000 within Thailand, and request to speak with the "Duty Officer."

U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Call (880) (2) 885-5500. Press '0' and ask to speak to the duty officer.

Hospitals

Pattaya

Bangkok Pattaya Hospital is about 30 minutes from the Utapao airport.

Tel: 259999, 301 Moo 6 Sukhumvit Road, Km. 143, Banglamung, Chonburi, Thailand 20150

www.bangkokpattayahospital.com

For emergencies, call 191.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival

Security and Badging

Daily Mission Schedule

Lab & Hangar Safety

Network

Reporting & Archiving

Telephones, Fax & Printer

Misc.

ESPO Cell Phone Numbers